

Tidings of Hope: The Social Concerns Newsletter of the Diocese of Green Bay

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Dear colleagues in parish social ministry and Catholic social action:

“...The voices of parishioners need to be heard on behalf of vulnerable children-born and unborn, on behalf of those who suffer discrimination and injustice, on behalf of those without health care or housing, on behalf of our land and water, our communities and neighborhoods. Parishioners need to bring our values and vision into the debates about a changing world and shifting national priorities. Parishes and parishioners are finding diverse ways to be political without being partisan, joining legislative networks, community organizations, and the advocacy groups....”

These are not my words, but those of United States Catholic Conference, the forerunner of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Bishops wrote these words in their 1996 document, *Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish*. As persons involved in parish social ministry and Catholic social action, we have a special mission to study, pray over, form our consciences, and communicate with our lawmakers based on our interpretation of Catholic social teaching and public policy legislation in Washington D.C., Madison, WI; and our own counties and cities.

In the last several months, many of us have communicated the Church’s teaching on some pretty volatile legislative issues: the right to collective bargaining; the need for immigration reform; the right to quality health care; the necessity of **not** cutting government deficits on the backs of poor people; insuring the necessity of clean air, water, and soil in our communities; etc. Whether we have written intercessory prayers in parish liturgies or used commentaries to assist in homily writing, lead letter writing campaigns in the church gathering space; placed educational inserts in parish bulletins; hosted social justice guest speakers; promoted JustFaith Ministries offerings in our churches, etc. in order to promote Catholic social teaching, we sometimes rattled cages of some Catholics who don’t agree with the legislative policy positions of the Catholic Church.

I invite everyone to examine the United States Bishops’ priorities for the new Congress. On January 14, 2011, Archbishop Timothy Dolan, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops offered members of Congress a listing and rationale of these priorities:

“...Most fundamentally, we will work to protect the lives of the most vulnerable and voiceless members of the human family, especially unborn children and those who are disabled or terminally ill...”

“...We stand firm in our support for marriage, which is and can only be a faithful, exclusive, lifelong union of one man and one woman...”

“...We will work with the administration and Congress for budget, tax and entitlement policies that reflect the moral imperative to protect poor and vulnerable people...”

“...With regard to the education of children, we call for a return to the equitable participation of students and teachers in private schools in programs funded through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act...”

“...We welcome continuing commitments to empower faith-based groups as effective partners in overcoming poverty and other threats to human dignity...”

“...As the Internet continues to grow in the influence and prominence in Americans’ lives, we support legislation and federal regulations that ensure equal access of the Internet for all...”

“...The Catholic bishops of the United States have worked for nearly a century to assure health care for all, insisting that access to health care is a basic human right and requirement of human dignity...”

“...We will work with the administration and the new Congress to fix a broken immigration system which harms both immigrants and our entire nation...”

“...we will work with our leaders to seek a responsible transition to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and promote religious freedom for all...”

“...We will continue to support essential U.S. investments to overcome global poverty, hunger and disease through increased and reformed international assistance...”

Consider reading the full text of the letter, <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2011/11-014.shtml>. Prayerfully consider this roadmap in all of your advocacy to President Obama and Congress in the coming two years.

Yours in Christ,

Steve Herro, O. Praem.

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Social Concerns Director



Bishop Ricken announces position on new diocesan commission, CCHD collection, and JOSHUA/ESTHER



Catholic Campaign for Human Development
UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Bishop David Ricken met on February 16 with representatives from groups active in social justice issues throughout the Diocese of Green Bay and announced the creation of a new initiative, the Commission on Living Justice. It will take a leading role in the catechesis, planning, and implementation of Catholic Social Teaching in the Diocese.

At the same meeting, Bishop Ricken announced that he has reinstated the collection for Catholic Campaign for Human Development. He suspended the collection in 2010 as a result of questions surrounding the Catholicity of some national grant

recipients. The 2011 collection will be part of the Collection for the World's Poor, the weekend of April 2-3, 2011.

Bishop Ricken also confirmed his position on Catholic organizations in our diocese participating in non-Catholic organizations. He declared that Catholic organizations will not be allowed to be corporate members in organizations that are not Catholic, such as JOSHUA and ESTHER. Catholic organizations may participate as a partner and individual Catholics may serve as private parties in such organizations. Catholic organizations are to formally sever membership ties by July 1, 2011. Bishop Ricken's entire position is available at http://www.gbdioc.org/images/stories/Front_Page/PDFs/Pastoral-Statement-on-Living-Justice_02162011.pdf

Small Changes ...Big Differences - Engage in Operation Rice Bowl this Lent

(This article is reprinted with permission from JustFaith Voices, winter 2011, p. 3. The entire issue of the newsletter is available at http://justfaith.org/news/pdf/jf_voices-11q1.pdf)



Operation Rice Bowl (ORB), the Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services, offers people in the United States a way to connect with our brothers and sisters around the world. ORB began in 1975 in the Diocese of Allentown, PA, as a response to the drought in the African Sahel. It is based on the premise that through solidarity the world can be transformed.

Operation Rice Bowl calls participants to pray with their families and faith communities, fast in solidarity with those who hunger, learn about our global community and the challenges of poverty around the world, and give contributions to those in need. Each year, nearly 14,000 faith communities across the United States participate in Operation Rice Bowl as a way to foster solidarity with the poor around the world.

Over the past 35 years, \$191 million has been collected through Operation Rice Bowl. This money is used to support the CRS development projects that are designed to improve people's ability to access food. The money is distributed in communities around the world, including in the United States.

Lent begins this year on March 9th. We encourage you to find ways to connect with our sisters and brothers around the world and to participate in Operation Rice Bowl. If your parish has not received the ORB materials or if you personally want to participate, please go to <http://orb.crs.org/> and learn more about this program and how to order materials. For more information about implementing Operation Rice Bowl in our diocese, please contact Margie Sumnicht, World Missions Coordinator, email msumnicht@gbdioc.org, phone 272-8192 or 1-877-500-3580, ext. 8192

This year, Operation Rice Bowl will feature the countries of Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Senegal, Honduras and the work of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Living Faith is Focus of *Catholics at the Capitol*



On Tuesday, April 5, Catholics from around the state will meet at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin, for *Catholics at the Capitol 2011*. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) in cooperation with numerous Catholic organizations, this biennial

event is a day of education, advocacy, and fellowship.

The theme for this year's event, "Living Faith in the Public Square", focuses on how Catholic teaching enhances public policy debates. The day features breakout sessions on a variety of issues, such as state budgeting, promoting life, food policy and production, human trafficking, health care reform, immigration, parental choice in education, and more. Experts from around the state will be on hand to examine issues that advance the common good, and will offer suggestions on how to engage in effective advocacy.

The Most Reverend Jerome E. ListECKI, Archbishop of Milwaukee, will provide a keynote address on how faith and religious perspectives elevate public policy debate. During the afternoon general session, a panel of bishops and lay faithful will discuss witnessing to hope during uncertain times.

"*Catholics at the Capitol* gives Catholics a unique opportunity to actively engage their elected officials and see firsthand the affect their advocacy has on policy makers," said WCC Executive Director John Huebscher. "Catholics come together to pray, learn about key policy issues, and make personal contact with public officials and staff."

Registration begins at 8:15 am, and the day's events start with a prayer service at 9:15 am. After the afternoon general session adjourns at 3:30 pm, participants are encouraged to walk over to the State Capitol to meet with their legislators and staff.

Deadline for registration is Monday, March 21. For those who register in advance, the registration fee is \$37 for non-students and \$12 for full-time students. Same-day registration is \$40 for all non-students.

For more information, call the Wisconsin Catholic Conference at 608-257-0004, or visit the WCC's website at www.wisconsincatholic.org. Details on how to arrange meetings with legislators, as well as other important information will be provided in the registration confirmation packet.

Wisconsin Catholic Conference responds to stalemate over Budget Repair Bill

Archbishop Jerome ListECKI, President of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, released a letter to the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee on February 16, 2011. While the Wisconsin Senate and Governor Walker were at a stalemate over parts of the Governor's Budget Repair Bill, Archbishop ListECKI wrote in part:

... The Church is well aware that difficult economic times call for hard choices and financial responsibility to further the common good. Our own diocese and parishes have not been immune to the effects of the current economic difficulties. But hard times do not nullify the moral obligation each of us has to respect the legitimate rights of workers. As Pope Benedict wrote in his 2009 encyclical, *Caritas in veritate*:

Governments, for reasons of economic utility, often limit the freedom or the negotiating capacity of labor unions. Hence traditional networks of solidarity have more and more obstacles to overcome. The repeated calls issued

within the Church's social doctrine, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*, for the promotion of workers' associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honored today even more than in the past, as a prompt and far-sighted response to the urgent need for new forms of cooperation at the international level, as well as the local level.

...As Pope John Paul II wrote in 1981, "[a] union remains a constructive factor of *social order* and *solidarity*, and it is impossible to ignore it."

It is especially true in times of crisis that "new forms of cooperation" and open communication become essential. We request that lawmakers carefully consider the implications of this proposal and evaluate it in terms of its impact on the common good. We also appeal to everyone – lawmakers, citizens, workers, and labor unions – to move beyond divisive words and actions and work together, so that Wisconsin can recover in a humane way from the current fiscal crisis.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Volunteer opportunities abound through GYSD and Postal Workers Food Drive

Global Youth Service Day (www.gysd.org) is an annual campaign that celebrates and mobilizes the millions of children and youth who improve their communities each day of the year through service and service-learning. This year, GYSD will be April 15-17, 2011.

The Mauthe Center (the former Ecumenical Center, located on the campus of University of Wisconsin Green Bay) has been selected as one of only 75 organizations to serve as a Lead Agency in Wisconsin and bring the community together to

celebrate and do service April 15-17. Connect to www.mcenter.org and learn more about Global Youth Service Day in our northeast Wisconsin; how to post a volunteer opportunity, how to sign up for a public service event, etc.

Later in the spring, St. Patrick Parish Pantry (Green Bay) requests assistance of up to 60 persons for the annual Postal Workers Food Drive (Saturday, May 14). For more information or to volunteer, contact Donna Kessler, Pantry Manager at (920) 499-0062 or email kesslerdo@aol.com.

Br. Steve Herro announces resignation from Diocese of Green Bay

Br. Steve Herro, O. Praem., resigned his position as Social Concerns Director, Diocese of Green Bay, effective February 28, 2011. He left after six and one half years of service. His next ministry assignment is still being discerned by Steve and the Norbertine community.

Mark Mogilka, Director of Stewardship & Pastoral Services, stated that persons may contact Mark until the Diocese has formally determined how to fill Steve's position. Mark's email is mmogilka@gbdioc.org or call (920) 272-8297 or 1-877-500-3580, ext. 8297